

## **THE PARISH OF GASPE: FUNERAL AND BURIAL POLICY 2019**

Website: [www.parishofgaspe.ca](http://www.parishofgaspe.ca)

### **You Find Yourself Responsible for Organizing a Funeral and/or Burial**

The Parish of Gaspé is ready to assist you as you make decisions about the funeral and/or burial of a family member, a friend or yourself. Whether you are dealing with a sudden death or perhaps putting in place plans to make things easier for others in the future, engaging with death and the associated rituals and tasks is usually difficult and painful. We hope the policy set out below responds to your needs and questions, lifting some of the burden. Please see the list on the home-page of our website for the names and contact information of those available to help: incumbent, wardens, deputy wardens, organist.

### **Public or Private Cemeteries?**

The Parish of Gaspé owns and operates five cemeteries: St. Paul's (Gaspé); St. James (Wakeham); St. Andrew's (York); St. John and St. Philip (Sandy Beach) and St. Matthew's (Peninsula). These are Anglican cemeteries, not public cemeteries such as one may find in many cities. Each of these cemeteries has been consecrated and is therefore a sacred space. An Anglican incumbent must be present at all burials in any of these cemeteries, whether casket or urn is used, whether a funeral is held or graveside prayers.

### **Religious or Secular?**

Funerals in our churches are religious and use the Anglican rite. If requested in discussion ahead of time with the incumbent, she/he may work with you to incorporate into the service prayers and participation from another denomination. At minimum, a prayer of committal at the graveside is essential.

We ask that family members and friends who may not consider themselves people of the faith to respect the holiness of the place and the event and to conduct themselves appropriately. (The incumbent reserves the right to intervene in the event of unseemly words or actions.)

### **Who to Contact First?**

The first person you should contact is the incumbent (see parish website for contact information). In consultation, a date and time need to be agreed upon. The incumbent will ensure the church is reserved and prepared for use if a funeral is being held. The incumbent will want to meet with you and others involved in decision-making. Please allow for two hours to discuss hymns, readings, eulogy and to determine roles for family and friends.

### **How to Make Cemetery Arrangements?**

You may purchase a plot(s) ahead of time or when you are preparing for a funeral/burial. See contact information on our website and the fee schedule below. Our cemeteries differ as to soil type and presence of rock. These variations may affect plot size and available location.

Grave work (pre and post burial) and snow removal, if necessary, are the responsibility of the family of the deceased. If you would like to hire someone to take on these jobs, please request information from a deputy warden. If you and your family/friends are doing the grave work yourselves, it is important to observe the following requirements.

### **Burial of a Casket:**

The grave should be 230 cm (92 in) by 86 cm (34 in). and 168 cm (66 in) in depth, where possible. You may choose to build or have built a box liner.

**Burial of Cremated Remains:**

Urns, boxes or other receptacles of ashes require a space of 60 cm x 60 cm (24 x 24 inches).

**After the Burial:**

Following the burial, excess ground or gravel must be removed, the site raked, and grass seed planted. Wreaths and flowers are to be removed when no longer fresh. A headstone or marker is required, respecting the boundaries of the plot. **Note:** Snow plows are not permitted in the cemetery. A snow blower may be used to open the roadway, but only a domestic sized snow blower or shovel should be used around graves.

**Plot maintenance:**

Grave sites are to be left plain except for grave markers and/or flowers. Flowers may be placed on or beside the grave marker and will be removed before the first snowfall each year. Should a grave sink, the family is responsible for adding soil, leveling the site and reseeding the plot. This is essential to permit proper mowing. For the same reason, the installation of boxes and fences is not permitted.

**Fees:**

**Cemetery Plot:** \$150 for a half plot (one casket) or \$300 for a full-size plot (two caskets). Urns or boxes may be added to a plot containing a casket, providing the required dimensions can be observed.

**Funeral:** If the deceased has contributed at least \$150 to the Parish of Gaspé in the previous calendar year, that support of the parish is understood to include the use of the church and the services of a cleric for a funeral. If the deceased has not contributed at least \$150 during the last calendar year, \$300 will be charged for the use of the church, \$100 for the cleric and \$50 for the sextant who will open, prepare the church and close-up afterwards.

We ask for your understanding of the necessity of these fees. Churches must be maintained, insured, heated and cleared of snow. They must also be served by licensed clergy. We are part of the diocesan and the national church structures and as such have norms to meet.

**Music:** The services of an organist (\$50) and choir (\$25) are available if you so choose. Please request contact information from the cleric.

**Burial with Graveside Prayers:** A cleric must be present at all burials. While the prayers to be used may be discussed by the family with the cleric, the prayer of committal must be said. The cleric's services are included for those who have contributed at least \$150 to the parish within the last calendar year. Otherwise, the cleric's fee will be \$100.

**Annual Maintenance Fee:** We encourage each family to pay \$25 per year toward the maintenance of the cemetery. (No charge at St. Matthew's as maintenance costs are borne by Parc Forillon.) This fee covers the caretaker who is hired to do the mowing and trimming of the grass in and around the cemetery.

Families may choose to donate \$500 to the appropriate Cemetery Fund (except St. Matthew's), which will ensure perpetual care. This donation may be paid over a five-year period provided it is properly indicated with the annual donation. Note: if paying by cheque, please make cheque payable to "St. Andrew's Cemetery" for York, or "Parish of Gaspé" for all other cemeteries. Drop the cheque into any collection plate, or mail it to the address on the web site.